

FamilySearch Search: Tips and Tricks

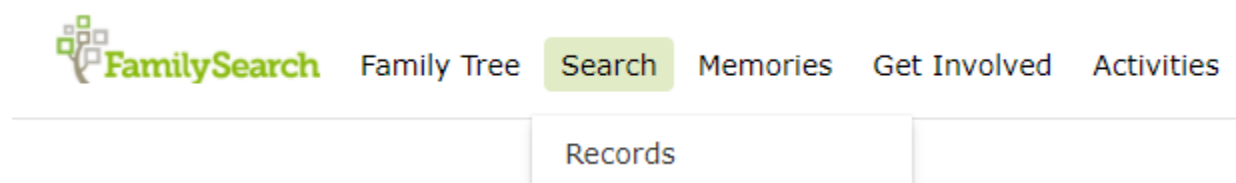
Objective: Learn how to effectively access and search the record collections available on FamilySearch, including the unindexed record collections.

Because FamilySearch has a vast collection of records, and more than 70% of those images are not indexed it is important to learn how to access records that may contain the information you are looking for.

Records Search:

The Records Search page on FamilySearch allows for general searches as well as access to thousands of unindexed records.

From The tool bar you'll be able to access other helpful resources such as the catalog and the Wiki. There is a ton that can be discovered just from the "Records" search of FamilySearch.



Tips for Effective Searches:

Getting started researching can be difficult but as you begin with a goal in mind, and start with more broad searches as opposed to direct, specific searches, you will be more successful. Sometimes it can be helpful to add 2-5 years to a date to account in age variations between records. Using spelling variations can also be very helpful.

Searching several times with different record collections and varied search terms will increase your successfulness. Filters can also be super helpful.

The Records Search page has a link to a list of helpful search tips that will benefit even a seasoned researcher.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/when-i-am-searching-historical-records-what-are-the-best-practices-and-tips>

Browse by Collection:

The search bar allows for a collections search similar to the keyword and title search in the catalog. If you know the name of the collection you are looking for, simply type the title into the search bar. If you don't remember the complete name of the collection, or want to do a more broad search, you can type in a keyword to see what titles may contain that particular word.

You can choose to browse all collections. There are multiple ways to narrow down searches for collections such as by place, date range, and collection type. Viewing the Collections list is helpful to know what collections have images available online and which ones have been indexed.

After selecting which collection you want to work with, you'll see a brief description of what the collection contains, how to use that specific collection, a citation base for that collection, and how to view the images in that specific collection. Sometimes the images will be indexed allowing for a quick search through the indexed data. Other times you will have to browse through the images.

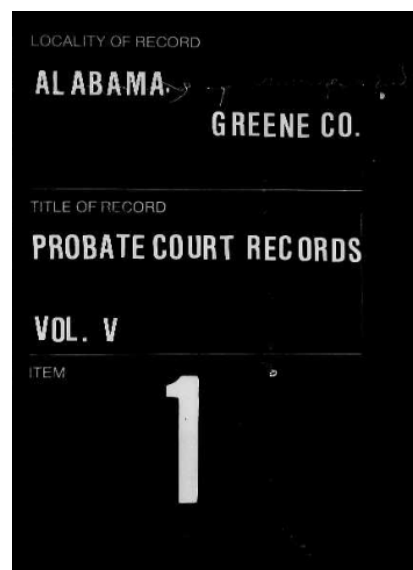
Looking through the images can seem daunting, but can be easier if you know how to navigate through images on FamilySearch.

You'll need to know how each collection is organized. Depending on the collection, it may be organized by year, alphabetically, by jurisdiction, or even volume.

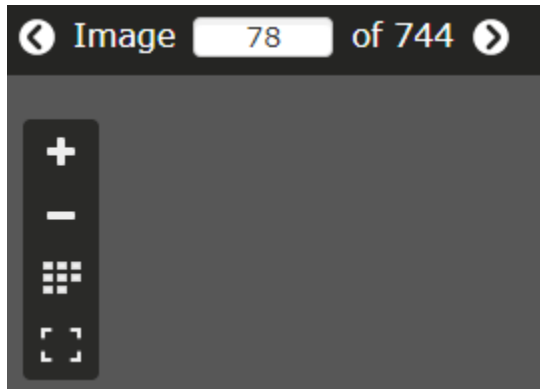
Finding the black intro sides can be particularly helpful in knowing what is included in the subsequent images. You'll want to look for the right hand side of the slide that gives the locality, title of the record, and item number.

This particular example shows that the images are Probate Court Records for Greene Alabama vol. V. It is also item 1. Using the catalog can be helpful at this point to know what the different items are in a particular film. In the case of these probate records, we were looking for item 2 that has the images for volume W.

Looking at the thumbnails of the images rather than clicking through each individual image will save us time if we know we are looking for item 2.



To switch to view the thumbnails of the images, look for the toolbar at the top of the screen, and select the button that looks like little tiles.

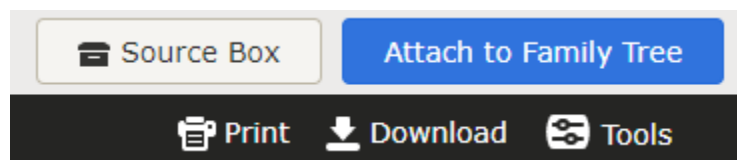


Locate the end of item 1 and beginning of item 2. If you double-click on the image you want to view, it will enlarge that particular image.



Once you locate the image you want, you can save it to your Source Box, download it, and even attach it directly to your tree.

Make sure to create a good citation for the image you found and detailed notes on how to find the image again.



Browse by Place:

From the Records page there is also an option to “Search by Place”. Once again you can just start typing the place you want in the search bar, or you can browse through the different places. Using the interactive map and the “Place Resources” toolbar, you can find any place that FamilySearch has record collections for.

If we search for the Philippines, we’ll be brought to a research page for the country. From this page you can access learning courses for this particular location, search through indexed historical records, help with specific indexing projects, access the FamilySearch wiki page for the location, view the image only collections, and view the catalog material for this location.

Searching by place can be particularly helpful if you want to know what types of records FamilySearch may have for that particular location

Other Helpful Resources:

The blog on FamilySearch has a bunch of helpful resources such as Robert Kehrer’s video series about finding elusive records on FamilySearch.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/finding-elusive-records-on-familysearch>